

The Samplers, the oeuvre, & mono-graphing

In the sixteenth century, Montaigne was still saying 'that am I, and not I am that', which was perfectly correct, since the subject is constituted by everything which happens to it and by everything it does. But the subject is never itself until the end, as a product.
(Roland Barthes)¹

You as invention

(Killeen, the blue notebook, August 1971)

17. 5. 75

*A problem that seems to exist with ...
the putting of one thing on the canvas is that
it makes that one thing significant when, in
actual fact, that thing isn't ...*

*Somehow a sense of the arbitrary is needed.
perhaps some sort of combination ...*

(Killeen, the black notebook, p. 9)

14. 6. 75

Combinations

*One idea which makes 1 thing
which makes one painting -- not
what I want. Combinations of
ideas that have no
relevance to each other better.
Also have to forget about one shot
look of a painting.
Assemble many drawings of different ideas, then
use them as a combination.*

No hierarchy.

Probably look like ideograms -- pictographs.

Start left hand corner proceed left to right?

(Killeen, the black notebook, pp. 4-5)

Collections of things....

New combinations of old elements.

¹ Roland Barthes, 'L'Express Talks with Roland Barthes', *The Grain of the Voice: interviews 1962-1980*, transl. Linda Coverdale, Hill & Wang, New York, 1985, p. 103.

the difficulty is that whatever you have to use in a painting you seem to be forever forced to arrange it in some way -- because of the nature of painting.
(Killeen, *the black notebook*, p. 19)

In a number of works scattered through 1975 and 1976 we may see Killeen attempting to make out of some years of his work, *one work*; a work whose disjunctive parts, product though they are of a succession of disparate moments, might come, as if in one moment, together. We may see Killeen 'enclosed by his own synchronicity'² -- annulling the time-scale of the oeuvre, making synchronic the diachronic, gathering the scattered trove of his past into the simultaneity of a seemingly single and seemingly present space. These works, each of which is a depository of images of diverse date, we might call *Samplers* -- specimens of proficiencies attained, and now preserved and displayed within a single enclosure. *Sampler* -- that single ground where you show off the variety of your stitches...

Killeen is caught here in the act of reading (re-reading) his own oeuvre. Enclosed now in a synchronous past, he is distanced from such present self as he might have, as he gazes over his own retrospective. And yet -- and simultaneously -- in bringing into focus selected parts of that retrospective, he is constructing a present self.

The sampler becomes prospective, as well as retrospective, since Killeen 'presumes on the basis of a resume'.³ He disinters -- cuts out from the turf of the oeuvre, and thus sharply marks off from the rest -- what in the oeuvre he would be and become. He attempts -- prematurely, it might seem to hindsight -- the decisive indecision the cut-outs will come to: neither figurative nor abstract, neither geometric or organic, neither hard-edged or soft, but all and at once -- the decisive co-existence of the incompatible.

'That am I', he is saying. 'I am the product of that.' Or rather -- and this is hardly speakable -- 'those are I' : those disparate effects, products each of the various years, are what I am. They are what makes me. And they are also what I compose myself of -- for there is an element of wilfulness here. The

² Leigh Davis, 'Solo Curnow', *And* 3, October 1984, p. 60.

³ Lucien Dallenbach, *The Mirror in the Text*, transl. Jeremy Whitely & Emma Hughes, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1989, p. 67.

subject (the self) is never itself, one might say, until the end, when it is achieved as a *production*. 'You as invention', as Killeen says.

So, in the Samplers, Killeen is in a sense being *produced* by his past; yet, at the same time, he is *producing* it, *inventing* it, in selecting its parts for his present convenience. He is the product of his past, while, simultaneously, that past, by his very act of selection from it, is made a production of this present. In the play of this double effect, Killeen constitutes, out of all the disparate parts and disjunctive times of his past, at once an oeuvre and himself as an artistic subject. It is a strategy of auto-generation and auto-graphing, a mono-graphing and solo showing with paint.

And yet, it is hardly that Killeen is avid now for some new and more complex coherency, some higher unity -- there is no synthesis here. Rather, there is an attraction to the *in*-coherent when he seeks in the past of his work. He makes of the array of his past a disarray. He does not succumb to the institutional requirement of the monograph, survey, or retrospective, that it recover a unified ego -- a signature style -- from all the heterogeneity of past practice. He endeavours instead to keep the pungency of his past's parts -- their separability -- to preserve, when he places say a beetle, a frog or a fish next to a precisionist grid, all the pang of *difference*.

He makes a monograph, in which the mono is somewhat undone. Precisely, of course, what he will do in the cut-outs, and what I hope to be up to here, despite my perhaps inevitable failure.

'Perhaps inevitable'? The failure to undo the mono while working *within* a monograph *is* inevitable, since the monograph's 'problem' is precisely the same as that marked by Killeen: 'the putting of one thing on the canvas [one name] ... makes that thing significant in ways that it is not'. It picks the one out from the many for a sort of transcendentalising attention, making of the single, the singular.

I began by trying to suggest Killeen as a voice of the New Zealand regionalist tradition, as but one voice among the many speaking that discourse -- or rather, being spoken *by* it; and I tried then to show him as a product of his reaction to that discourse. In my chapter on 'The U.S. connection' I will show very clearly how Killeen's 'I' becomes 'Us', how, in 'inventing' the cut-outs,

Killeen combines two different and never before combined things from Ellsworth Kelly and some other Americans -- so that 'invention' is seen to be the (new) combination of already existing elements. Throughout, I try to trace in the voice of Killeen the voices of others -- most notably, those of Walters, McCahon, and various Americans. I try too, like Killeen, to 'forget about the one shot look of a painting' or a writing, to paint, and even to mime, by means of my fragments, what seems to me to be his oeuvre's true disconnectedness. I constantly mark in his work the co-existence of the incompatible. Yet all this may avail me of nothing, or nearly nothing: one cannot help in a monograph but to monumentalise the mono.

And so it may rightly be objected by the reader: 'Your actual procedure raises doubts about your stated intentions.' And so, within the determining frame of the monograph, it is inevitable that I should hear a reader say: 'Your text makes an ideology of a sort for the works, so that they end up as part of a coherence'. And so, though throughout I try to make it clear that the early Killeen can hardly aim at the later works -- the cut-outs -- which he does not yet know, it is inescapable that I should hear the objection: 'Richard Killeen becomes here a figure concerned with disjunction -- more and more of it -- and appears as having a consistent and unitary aim, a goal: cut-outness.'

Like Killeen, I make "collections of things", 'new combinations of old elements', 'combinations of ideas that have no relevance to each other'. But, in his words of the single painting, 'the difficulty is that whatever you have to use' in a monograph, 'you seem to be forever forced to arrange it in some way -- because of the nature' of monographs. And the monograph's 'nature' and 'way' is chronological and consecutive, a treatment of events in which *consecution* is invariably turned into *consequence*.

'This is he', I am saying, even perhaps regardless of my intent. 'He is the product of that.' Or rather -- and this is hardly speakable -- 'those are he': those disparate effects, products each of the various years, are what he is. They are what makes him. And they are also what I compose him of -- for there is an element of wilful invention here, as, in reading (re-reading) the oeuvre, I select Killeen's parts for my present convenience; and as his past, by my very act of selection from it, becomes a production of this particular present. My sampler becomes prospective, as well as retrospective, since I presume on the basis of a resumé. The subject is never itself, one might say, until the end, when it is

achieved as a *production*. 'You as invention', as Killeen says. The monograph *invents* the artist.

But what does it mean -- what *can* it mean -- when Killeen speaks of the 'you' as invention, or when I speak of inventing him?

First, I must admit an old meaning of 'invent', which still shades such uses of the word -- the old usage in which 'invention' means 'discovery'. As, for instance, in the title of Piero della Francesca's fresco, today called 'The *Discovery* and Proof of the True Cross', but called in the older books on the artist, 'The *Invention* and Proof of the True Cross'. If to invent is to create a new thing, and contradictorily, to discover is to find -- to dis-cover or uncover what already was there -- then, I will have to say, both contradictory senses of 'invent' subsist, whenever the idea of inventing Killeen is used, whether by the artist, or by myself. And so, I must play here on the double sense of this word. My whole text, perhaps, is but a play -- a kind of hilarious game -- on the word 'invention', and especially on two of its meanings: the old meaning, which was to discover, to find something that was already there before you; and the current meaning, which is to create something new, or even to concoct it, to make up a fictitious story.

In Piero's fresco of the *Discovery* or the *Invention of the True Cross*, a cross is represented as dug up by St. Helena from its centuries old hiding place in the earth, and demonstratively pointed to by a choric figure, and miraculously proved and named as the True Cross -- the cross upon which Christ had died. Which leads me to this question. Do you discover or do you invent the True Cross -- or the True Killeen; do you contrive or even concoct it, in the act of digging it up from where it had in some sense long existed, buried in distance and time, hidden by the years from you? Do you discover or do you invent the True Cross or the True Killeen in (re)naming it, in pointing to it, in 'proving' it, in miraculously or otherwise authenticating it?

You do both, undecidably, I will have to say -- both and at once.

I gaze over the Killeen retrospective. And yet -- and simultaneously -- in bringing into focus selected parts of that retrospective, I am constructing a present Killeen. What *I* make, too, is a Sampler, which is precisely what the monograph is: a depository of images of diverse date, preserved and displayed

within a single enclosure, a depository which makes of some years of an artist's work, *one work*: a work whose disjunctive parts, product though they are of a succession of disparate moments, come, as if in one moment, together. And in *my Sampler* too we may see Killeen 'enclosed by his own synchronicity', and the time-scale of the oeuvre is annulled, and the diachronic made synchronic, as the scattered trove of his past is gathered into the simultaneity of a single and present space.

Yet the point remains: if Killeen seeks in the Samplers for what in his past he would retain and re-use, what is usable has no commonality -- it is quite irreconcilable with itself. His, everywhere, always, is an aesthetic, and an abyss, of *difference*...

All that refusal of development and maturation, that operation by displacement, those abrupt and catastrophic mutations, those endless cleavages between the component parts of the oeuvre which have characterised Killeen, are here in the Samplers re-produced -- but with this difference: the conflict is now among the components of the single painting. In a single space now, Killeen marks the co-existence of the incompatible.

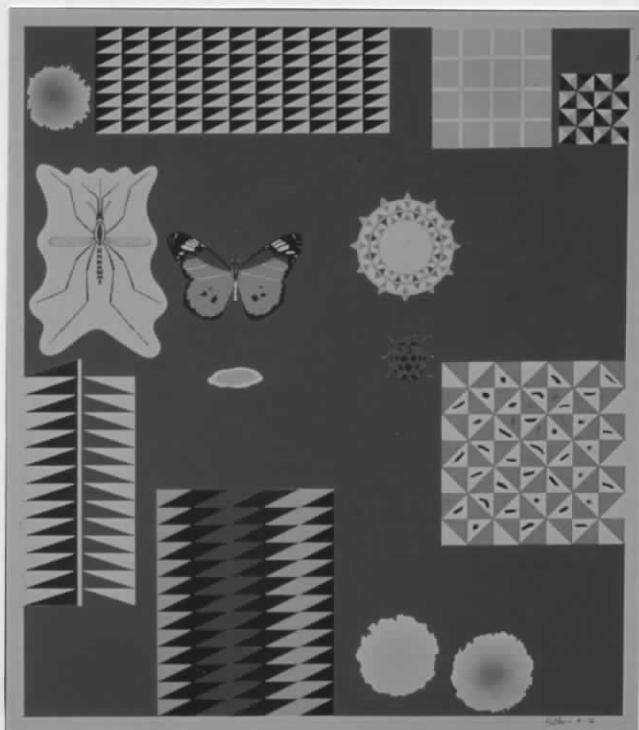


fig. 135. *Some of his parts*, April 1976

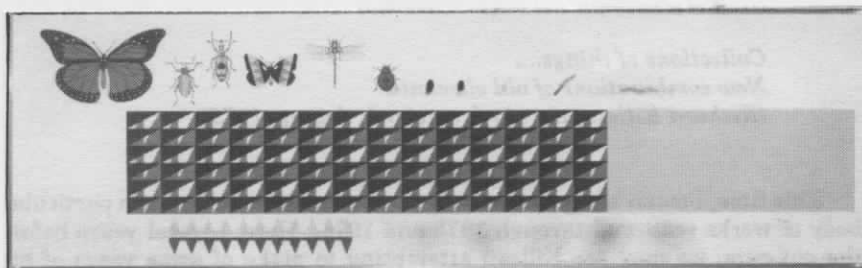


fig. 136. *Once more with feeling*, June 1976

Three paintings, especially, may serve to exemplify the Samplers: *Some of his parts*, April 1976; [fig. 135] *Once more with feeling*, June 1976, [fig. 136] and *'Painted over'*, August 1975. [fig. 137] In *'Painted over'*, Killeen jostles together, into the vertical stacks of one time and one space, those 'abstract', geometrical signs which the oeuvre had gathered together only slowly and intermittently over some years of its practice. There are Laces, and one of those more solid circles which preceded them; there are Combs and eight pointed stars; there is the Islamic, and the Polynesian, and the African pattern; there are triangulated Shields, a few of which were painted at the same time as the laces; there are such Grids as clearly emerge from the Combs -- here Killeen rightly reads how the oeuvre may produce its own sequels; there are grids variously triangulated or checkered; there is a grid like those he will paint on aluminium grounds in 1978, immediately preceding the cut-outs.



fig. 137. *'Painted over'*, August 1975

He gives up *'Painted over.'* It is, in this form, unacceptable. He paints over it. Twice. As if to resolve, by presenting as irresolvable, an irresolvable

past. He grids it over, as if to cover it with the most finalised, strict, and undevelopable of modernist forms. But then he grids over that grid again. He leaves 'Painted over' unpainted over only in the briefest of interstices, as if to mark the impossibility or insufficiency of the finalised grid. He makes of the painting a hardly readable palimpsest, as though his past, after all, may only come in irresolvable and irreconcilable layers, not in mastered and accepted simultaneity. He calls the result *Three patterns* (August 1975). [fig. 126]

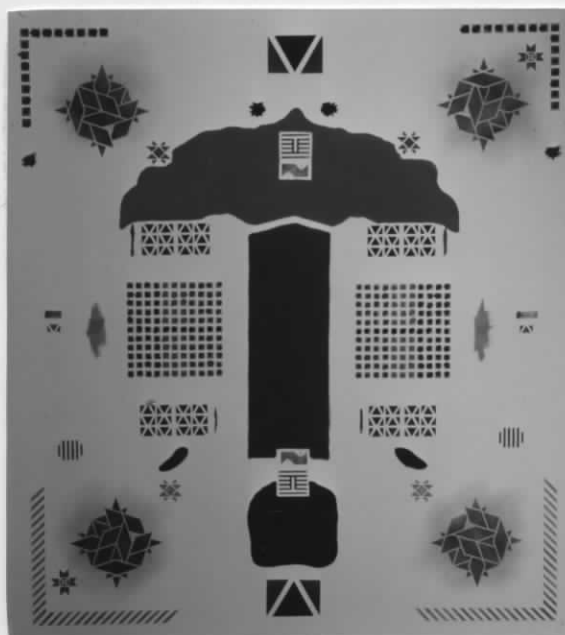


fig. 138. 'Sampler 1', January 1975

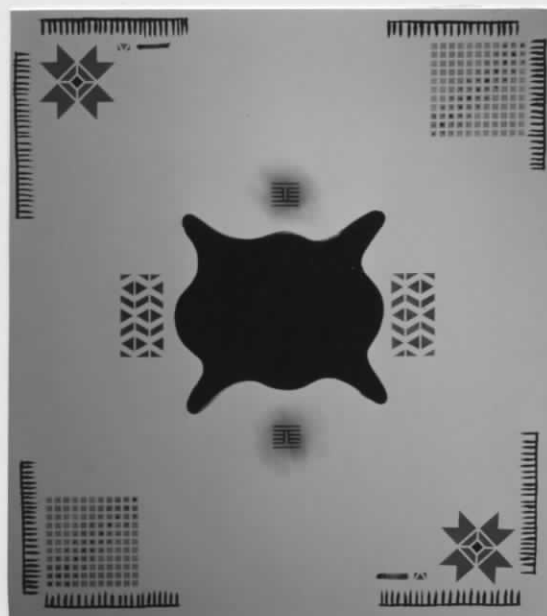


fig. 139. 'Sampler 2', January 1975

Other works of 1975 essay a still more difficult task: they try to take from the oeuvre, and to assemble together, the organic, the irregular and the painterly, as well as the geometric abstractions. 'Sampler 1' [fig. 138] and 'Sampler 2', [fig. 139] of January 1975, bring together triangulated and checkered borders and grids; eight pointed stars, comb motifs, flat, irregular patches; I-Ching-like grills; and soft circles of haze. Here -- and in other such Samplers -- each figure is isolated on the white ground, and placed according to a rigid principle of bilateral axial symmetry. It is as though it is only by the most rigid of dispositions that might Killeen master his disparate parts.

The Samplers of 1976 abandon such symmetry. *Once More with feeling* [fig. 136] lays numbly out in a triple stacked row -- whatever you have to use in a painting you are forced to arrange in some way -- two butterflies, two beetles; a dragonfly; a ladybird; four brushstrokes and a squiggle; a triangulated grid and a yellow rectangle; a comb such as appeared in the earliest of the Comb series; and five circles of various colours of haze. (The wings of one of the butterflies are patterned with a triangulated grid, as if the organic and the geometric might, after all, be reconcilable.) *Some of his parts* [fig. 135] selects, once more with feeling, these disparate parts of Killeen's past: a triangulated Grid, a grid of the kind that developed directly out of the Combs, a square Grid of the kind yet to be painted on aluminium; a grid combining the organic and the triangular, as in *Blue Baron*; [fig. 127] a Lace; a ladybird, three more or less circular, hazy blobs; an irregular ovaloid mark; a long-legged insect; and a butterfly -- now all irregularly scattered on a red ground.

Here, in the Samplers, Killeen 'makes sense' of his oeuvre, as Leigh Davis would say,⁴ makes new sense of his oeuvre in the same way as we make sense of it, in a painting which teaches us to read the oeuvre. He makes sense, in Davis's words, 'enclosed by his own synchronicity'.

It is a collage effect -- a selection and clipping out from Killeen's 'habitual structures',⁵ so that these features become to him, as to us, 'iconic, recognisable as devices'.⁶ This citational cutting out in Killeen's Samplers does not present a *history* of Killeen's oeuvre. It is non-narrative. Not only does it leave parts out,

⁴ Leigh Davis, op. cit., p. 60.

⁵ Leigh Davis, op. cit., p. 55.

⁶ Leigh Davis, op. cit., p. 55.

choosing, for its own ends, to re-present this episode rather than that: it makes no concession to the chronological conventions of historical narrative.

In a sense, it is true to say of any of Killeen's earlier series that 'our understanding of their significance does not uniquely connect with any one' work, and that rather they become 'almost spatially indistinct'.⁷ All series works tend to exist, that is to say, in a kind of spatial and temporal spread. But the Samplers exceed this: they approach an absolute simultaneity.

They offer, in Walter Benjamin's usage of the term, a *conceptual* treatment.

Such a treatment differs significantly from historical treatment with its assumptions of unity. [Rather it] is concerned to demonstrate variety... In historical narratives differences and extremes are brought together in order that they might be relativised in evolutionary terms: in a conceptual treatment they acquire the status of complementary forces, and history is seen as no more than the coloured border to their own crystalline simultaneity.

(Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*)⁸

All this will be true of the cut-outs, too, for this sampling of the oeuvre never really stops in the oeuvre. This making the past exist as a trace in the face of the present, this making of the oeuvre a visible simultaneity never stops. The cut-out, *Tracing the lines of my face no. 1*, May 1985, [plate 134] for instance, will have a comb shape, as if it were a fragment cut out from the combs, and a flat red dragonfly, as if cut from the earliest of the cut-outs. *Time to change male institutionalised war*, June 1986, [plate 149] will have a suburban house, of the kind Killeen painted in the 'realist' pictures in 1969, and some dotted foliage, of the foliage convention he used between 1969 and 1970...

If Killeen is a multitude of irreconcilable personages, he (it) is also a multitude which returns to itself sometimes, which recognises the existence of its own others, which knows and recalls parts of itself, and which, in reflecting

⁷ Leigh Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁸ Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, transl. John Osborne, NLB, London, 1977, p. 38.

its own particles, makes of itself its own mirror of itself. Such a mirroring of itself is a meta-mirroring, at once *in* and *of* the text of the oeuvre, at once inside it as paint, and outside it as commentary. One might take as an instance of such memory and mirroring that man with a landscape in his head in all four versions of the cut-out, *Born alive in New Zealand* (October 1985, November 1985, December 1985, April 1986): [plates 141, 142, 143, & 147] it mirrors the man with a landscape in his head in a notebook sketch of 1969. [fig. 35] One might recall the sap-green frog of *Frogshooter*, March 1976, [fig. 132] repeated, in exactly the same form, in *Subjective attachments*, July 1983, [plate 103] and in *Subjective attachments no. 2*, August 1983, [plate 107] and in *Destruction of the circle*, 8 March 1990, [fig. 140] where it overlays a Comb such as Killeen had painted through the years of 1973 and '74. Killeen's oeuvre *draws upon* itself.

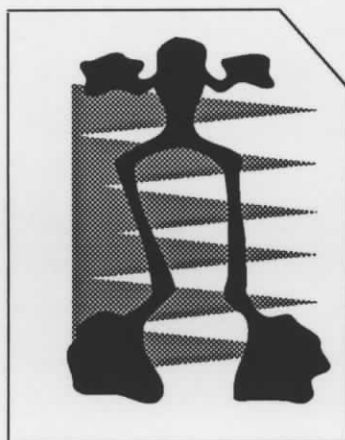


fig. 140. Diagram of piece from *Destruction of the circle*, 8 March 1990

The Chance paintings of 1970 had done this, too, retrospectively compiling the habitual imagery of the earlier 'realist' works, taking a bulldozer, say, an armchair, a clock, and adding to them items from the non-realist works which followed -- a tiger, say, a lamb, a road-crossing sign, and a minus and a plus sign -- and submitting them all to the chance of a throw of dice or a shuffle of cards.

Killeen's 'returns', we might call them. Or Killeen's re-readings. Killeen constantly establishes his own tradition for himself, as doubtless all artists do: but here that establishment is turned into a *theme*, as the oeuvre, in an emphatic prosopopoeia, audibly says to us: 'Here I am tracing the lines of my own face'. Which announcement may be taken in two ways: 'I am and already was, and here I am tracing the lines of my already given face'; or, more

radically, as if the oeuvre may only come into existence in so announcing: 'I am, in that -- in as much as, and only in that -- I am tracing the lines of my face: it is this act of tracing which makes me'.

Norman Bryson's analyses of the artist's relation to tradition might be suggestive, here. They can be (mis)used to suggest Killeen's relation to his *own* past -- to *himself* as a tradition. Killeen is 'not simply at the mercy of his precursors'⁹ -- including those precursors or predecessors formed by his own earlier selves. Demonstratively with the Samplers, flagrantly there, but also throughout itself, what his oeuvre 'does is deliberately open itself to the whole course of itself. It 'places itself' in its own 'tradition by throwing a cordon round a ... corpus of precursive work ... to which it offers itself as containing vessel or palimpsest'.¹⁰ It makes of itself, in the words of a Killeen note of the literal palimpsests of his *Across the Vistula* series, a 'Board that remembers'.¹¹

Killeen's Samplers are oeuvre creating -- they constitute his past works *as* an oeuvre. An oeuvre *is* that which produces the synchronic out of the diachronic; it is an institution which imagines, and whose purpose it is to imagine, the whole array of an artist's past works as in a kind of simultaneity, as a sort of 'sculptural figure displayed ... on a revolving base', whose chronology reveals itself as no more than the successive aspects of a single and palpable being.¹²

The traditional art historical task is to find, through the diverse spread of a chronology, a unity -- to discover (to invent) a sort of synchronicity in the diachronic. But here, instead, I observe an endless oscillation between unity and disunity in Killeen's oeuvre; I go so far, sometimes, as to claim that oscillation, in its particularity, as the very mark of his work

The cut-out provides me at once with an image and an analysis of Killeen's oeuvre: in its fragmentation, and in its irreconcilability with itself, it represents the oeuvre *en abyme* -- the oeuvre in a miniaturised self-reflection.

⁹ Norman Bryson, *Tradition and Desire: from David to Delacroix*, Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 35.

¹⁰ Norman Bryson, *op. cit.*, p. 35

¹¹ Richard Killeen, the blue notebook, p. 61.

¹² Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character*, Harper and Row, New York, 1971, vol. 1, p. vii.

Killeen's *Tracing the lines of my face* and his Samplers are paradigmatic in this respect, appropriating as they do various parts of the artist's own past. They come like a godsend to my study. They offer a recurrence of items used in the past, yet in a context of *dis*-integration. Killeen, in such works as *Tracing the lines of my face* is like the Narcissus of Pinget's *Fable*, 'a blind Narcissus in search of his own scattered limbs, irredeemably condemned to disintegration'.¹³

Such repetitions of bits of his own past as we see in the Samplers might seem a reiterative bliss, perhaps, in which the painter grants himself a sense of continuity, and, therefore, of identity. It might seem as if Killeen would seek there to find his true face, his lasting face, the *one*, in gazing at the faces of his past. The Samplers might seem like the mirror in which Gide looks at himself as he writes, not so much to see himself *as* he writes -- a literal impossibility, in any case -- but in order to see himself as a *writer*.¹⁴ It might be said that such repetitions as Killeen's Samplers present 'tend to drain away what was irreducible about the present, making of it merely a benevolent double of the past',¹⁵ so that Killeen might seem *now* what he was *then*. But, the truth is, the repeated form exists here, in this memorial context of shapes foreign to its first appearance, only in its irreducible *difference*.

Each shape, here, in that it *is* here, in *this* time and *this* company, is no longer what it once was. And each shape here differs from each other. We may see now, as never so clearly before, that Killeen's is an aesthetic of difference.

Killeen's oeuvre is governed, as I have said, by incompatibility -- or rather, by the co-existence of incompatibilities. I do not wish to 'melt contradictions', as the concept of the oeuvre would seem to require, into 'the space of an overall figure'.¹⁶ Rather, I mark here what Killeen marks, what Foucault calls 'spaces of dissension', or, 'a space of multiple dissensions'.¹⁷

Art History in its treatment of the oeuvre is like the History of Ideas in Foucault's account: if it notices 'incompatible propositions', 'concepts that

¹³ Dallenbach, op. cit., p. 166.

¹⁴ Dallenbach, op. cit., p. 16.

¹⁵ Dallenbach, op. cit., p. 93.

¹⁶ Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 152.

¹⁷ Foucault, op. cit., p. 155.

cannot be systematised together', 'then it regards it as its duty to find, at a deeper level, a principle of cohesion that organises the discourse and restores to it its hidden unity'.¹⁸

*This law of coherence is a heuristic rule, a procedural obligation, almost a moral constraint of research: not to multiply contradictions uselessly; not to be taken in by small differences; not to give too much weight to changes, disavowals, returns to the past... But this same coherence is also a result of research: it defines the terminal unities that complete the analysis; it discovers the internal organisation of a text, the form of development of the individual oeuvre... In order to reconstitute it, it must first be presupposed, and one will only be sure of finding it if one has pursued it far enough and long enough. It appears as an optimum: the greatest number of contradictions resolved by the simplest means.*¹⁹

In fact, the means of resolving contradictions are diverse and many. Such a research may seek unities of *theme* in the oeuvre, explicit or implicit, conscious or unconscious. Unity 'can also be sought in structures that would have constrained the author the more he constructed them, and which would have imposed on him postulates, operational schemata, linguistic rules, a set of affirmations, and fundamental beliefs, types of images, or a whole logic of the fantastic'.²⁰ Such structures are kin to those I mention in my introductory chapter, 'What I do here', when, in a quote from Proust, I speak of finding in Killeen 'a unity that has not been aware of itself, therefore vital, not logical, that has not banned variety, chilled execution' -- those structures which, for fear of discovering them in seeing in their own *corpus* laid out, commonly make artists fear retrospectives as death.

And 'there are coherences that one establishes at the level of an individual -- his biography, or the unique circumstances of his discourse'.²¹ Furthermore, 'one can also establish them in accordance with broader

¹⁸ Foucault, op. cit., p. 149.

¹⁹ Foucault, op. cit., p. 149.

²⁰ Foucault, op. cit., p. 150.

²¹ Foucault, op. cit., p. 150.

guidelines, one can give them the collective, diachronic dimensions of a period, a general form of consciousness, a type of society, a set of traditions, an imaginary landscape common to a whole culture'.²²

In all these forms, a coherence discovered in this way always plays the same role: it shows that immediately visible contradictions are merely surface reflections; and that this play of dispersed light must be resolved into a single focus. Contradiction is the illusion of a unity that hides itself or is hidden... In any case, analysis must suppress contradictions as best it can. ²³

I would rather veer here towards Foucaultian archaeology in its claim that, for its analyses, 'contradictions are neither appearances to be overcome, nor secret principles to be uncovered. They are objects to be described for themselves, without any attempt being made to discover from what point of view they can be dissipated...'²⁴

Isn't this just what Killeen is doing in his *Samplers*? Describing the contradictions, the disparities of his past, as objects in their own right, without making any attempt to discover for them a unitary viewpoint? (As Killeen says, 'Combinations of ideas that have no relevance to each other [are] better'.) Or if there *is* an attempt by Killeen to discover a unitary viewpoint, it is an attempt doomed -- as the *Samplers* and later the cut-outs show -- to failure. The white ground in which the disparate parts appear is hardly a unifying field: it is no more than the space in which dissension -- those dissensions we call 'Killeen' -- are displayed.

Killeen might seem, from one angle, to be asserting his oeuvre *as oeuvre* -- as unity -- when with his *Samplers* he telescopes his past into his present; but he is (also) refusing to melt contradictions, to blend his oeuvre into a single overall figure. He presents himself -- his oeuvre -- in the *Samplers* as the mere co-existence of the incompatible; he shows his own oeuvre as no more than the space of multiple dissensions and dissolves.

²² Foucault, op. cit., p. 150.

²³ Foucault, op. cit., p.150.

²⁴ Foucault, op. cit., p. 151.

Also, while seeming to repeat -- to re-present -- his oeuvre, Killeen's Samplers paradoxically -- and irreparably -- transform it, metamorphosing the 'self' they represent. They take *this* from the oeuvre rather than that. They arrange some of his past's pasts in a new way, so that they are no longer what they were, making at once a new painting and a new *kind* of painting. Moreover: it is precisely by means of this self-representation that the oeuvre transforms itself. It here makes present to itself, as never before, its own coherences and its own self-contradictions. It writes itself anew in so reading itself. It makes present to itself, as never before, its fertile in-coherence.

Another observation. In these 'collections of things', as Killeen calls them, these 'new combinations of old elements', he realises, with a new force, that 'the difficulty is that whatever you have to use in a painting you seem to be forever forced to arrange it in some way -- because of the nature of painting'. A kind of painting -- this has never been so clear -- will have to be found whose nature is that the things within it do not have to be arranged. But how to do that with the means the oeuvre as yet presents?